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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Washington, DC) Today, Tuesday, May 12, marks the one-year anniversary of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raid on the Agriprocessors meatpacking plant in Postville, IA. The raid has become a devastating national symbol of what is wrong with an immigration policy that values fear tactics over family values.

"The Postville raid was one of the most extreme examples of misplaced priorities in our legal system," said Rep. Gutierrez Luis V. Gutierrez (D-IL). "The previous administration decided that meatpackers posed a greater threat to our security than suspected terrorists or physically abusive employers. It is time that we learned from the mistakes of the past, by ending the raids, ending the separation of families and enacting laws that reflect a better and more just vision of America. Though we have only just passed the first 100 days of the Obama Administration, it is the 11th hour for our immigrant community, and there is no time to waste."

During a visit to Postville, Iowa, last year, Rep. Gutierrez witnessed firsthand how a broken Immigration system devastates a small town.

"As a member of Congress, I have traveled to remote corners of the world and had my eyes opened to some of the worst human suffering imaginable—abject poverty, meager wages, poor working conditions, paltry access to legal counsel and a jarring lack of fairness in the courts," continued Rep. Gutierrez. "I never imagined that I would witness the same injustices in a small American town just a five-hour drive from my district in Chicago."

"Wives and children—many of them U.S. citizens—were left to wonder where their husbands and fathers had been taken, or where they would go next. Mothers bound to electronic bracelets

were allowed neither to work nor to return to their home countries, leaving them without recourse to pay rent or feed their children. Our broken immigration system had paved the way to the objectification of human beings at the expense of our labor laws, U.S. workers' safety and basic family values."

The raid did more than destroy families; it also undermined a local economy. The raid eliminated more than one-third of the meatpacker's workforce and nearly one-fifth of the town's population. It also prompted an exodus of hundreds more Hispanic residents who were either afraid of being targeted or felt compelled to escape the town's inevitable decline. Within months, once thriving restaurants were boarded up, landlords complained of too many empty units, and even the Wal-Mart in Decorah, a half-hour away, voiced concerns about the economic impact.

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